

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9936
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 DACCA 4128

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV BG
SUBJECT: THE NEW CABINET

REF: DACCA 4107

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT ZIA'S CONVERSION OF HIS COUNCIL OF ADVISORS INTO A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN A FURTHER STEP TOWARD THE FULL CIVILIANIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT AND TOWARD THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS SLATED FOR DECEMBER. THE NEW ENTRANTS ARE ALL ACTIVE IN POLITICAL PARTIES (INCLUDING JAGODAL) WHICH WERE IN THE ZIA ALLIANCE DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL POLL EARLIER THIS MONTH. HIS MOST EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNER, MASHIUR RAHMAN HAS BEEN DESIGNATED "SENIOR MINISTER", A TITLE SHORT OF PRIME MINISTER WHICH PRESUMABLY WILL BE RESERVED FOR SOMEONE ELECTED IN THE DECEMBER VOTING. MANY OF THE NEW ENTRANTS HAVE REPUTATIONS FOR
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LEFTIST SYMPATHIES, BUT THEY ARE ALSO TAKEN TO BE STAUNCH NATIONALISTS AND ONES WHOSE LEFTISM HAS BEEN DIRECTED VERY MUCH TOWARD FOREIGN POLICY, AND HERE TOWARD CHINA AND AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION, WHILE BEING MUCH LESS CONCERNED WITH RADICAL ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE INTERNAL PROBLEMS. ZIA HAS KEPT THE KEY MINISTERIAL POSTS BY AND LARGE IN THE HANDS OF "NON-POLITICIANS" AND WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION

(EDUCATION) THE NEWCOMERS HAVE BEEN AWARDED LESSER POSTS. SOME WHO HAVE BEEN POLITICIZED WHILE ADVISORS BY JOINING JAGODAL ALSO HAVE KEY POSTS. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE A TREND TOWARD THE LEFT DOMESTICALLY. WE ALSO DO NOT EXPECT ANY CHANGES IN FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT ZIA SEES THE CONVERSION OF HIS COUNCIL OF ADVISORS INTO A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, WITH A NUMBER OF CHANGES, AS A FURTHER STEP IN HIS DECLARED PROGRAM OF RETURNING BANGLADESH TO CIVILIAN RULE AND OF HOLDING A PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION IN DECEMBER. HE ALONE OF THE MINISTERS HAS A CONNECTION WITH THE MILITARY, THE OTHERS WHO HAVE MILITARY TITLES HAVING BEEN RETIRED, IN SOME CASES PRIOR TO BANGLADESH INDEPENDENCE.

3. THE CONFUSION WHICH WAS CREATED CONSTITUTIONALLY WHEN THE TITLE ADVISOR WAS USED FOR WHAT WAS ESSENTIALLY A MINISTERIAL POSITION HAS BEEN REMOVED. THERE IS NO QUESTION UNDER THE CONSTITUTION THAT A MINISTER MAY, SHOULD HE SO CHOOSE, PARTICIPATE IN PARTY POLITICS. INDEED HE IS EXPECTED TO DO SO. SEVERAL, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN RETAINED WHO HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED, AND PROBABLY WILL NOT, IN PARTY ACTIVITIES. BUT OTHERS OF HIS FORMER COUNCIL WERE ACTIVE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN ON BEHALF OF JAGODAL AND THEY CONTINUE TO BE SO IN AN EFFORT TO GAIN ELECTION AND RETAIN THEIR POSITIONS.
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4. THE NEW MINISTERS ARE DRAWN FROM THE PARTIES WHICH SUPPORTED ZIA IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE PARTIES WAS THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY/ BHASHANI (NAP/B) AND THE KEY LEADER OF THAT GROUP, MASHIUR RAHMAN, HAS BEEN GIVEN THE DESIGNATION "SENIOR MINISTER" IN THE NEW CABINET AND WILL RANK AHEAD OF ALL OTHERS. HIS PORTFOLIO IS ONE OF THE LESSER IN THE CABINET, BUT THIS IS EXPECTED TO FREE HIM FOR POLITICAL WORK WHILE THE BASICALLY TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE MINISTRY ARE HANDLED BY THE CIVIL SERVICE. MASHIUR IS AN ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE UNITED NAP AND FOLLOWED BHASHANI OUT OF THE MAIN GROUP WHEN IT SPLIT ON WHAT WERE SUPERFICIALLY DESCRIBED AS "MOSCOW VS. PEKING" QUESTIONS, MASHIUR AND BHASHANI TAKING THE LATTER SIDE. WHEN BHASHANI DIED LAST YEAR MASHIUR INHERITED THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY. DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN HE WAS, BY GENERAL AGREEMENT, THE MOST EFFECTIVE SPEAKER FOR ZIA OTHER THAN ZIA HIMSELF. THE NAP/B SUPPLIED ACTIVE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 DACCA 4128

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

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WORKERS WHO ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE THAN
THE LARGER, BUT LESS MOTIVATED, GROUP FROM THE MUSLIM
LEAGUE. AT 54, HE WAS MELLOWED CONSIDERABLY, PARTLY
PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS JAIL TERMS UNDER AYUB, YAHYA AND
MUJIB, BUT MAINLY AS HE HAS LARNED (OR RELEARNED
FOR THIS SON OF RELATIVE AFFLUENCE) TO ENJOY THE PRIVI-
LEGES AND ADVANTAGES WHICH HIS STATUS IN SOCIETY CAN
GIVE HIM. LIKE MANY OF THE POLITICIANS OF THE SUB-
CONTINENT, HIS BARK IS MUCH WORSE THAN HIS BITE. MOST
OBSERVERS EXPECT THIS ONE TIME RADICAL (PSEUDO-RADICALS?)
TO JOIN ZIA AND OTHERS IN PRESERVING THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE
VERY MUCH AS IT IS. TWO OTHER NAP/B MINISTERS HAVE BEEN
INCLUDED, S.A. BARI A.T., AND ABDUR RAHMAN; EACH HAS
BEEN GIVEN A MIDDLE LEVEL PORTFOLIO AND ARE PERHAPS
EXPECTED TO TEND THE MINISTRIES AT LEAST AS MUCH AS
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THEY WORK AT POLITICS.

5. THE DIVIDED MUSLIM LEAGUE (SPILT INTO FACTIONS

HEADED BY THE AGED ABDUS SOBUR KHAN AND THE NEW MINISTER SHAH AZIZUR RAHMAN) HAS BEEN GIVEN TWO SLOTS. AZIZUR RAHMAN WILL HOLD THE IMPORTANT LABOUR PORTFOLIO AND WILL SOON BE FACED WITH THE NECESSITY TO ISSUE AND IMPLEMENT THE PROMISED NEW LABOR POLICY. HE HAS HAD A CHECKERED POLITICAL CAREER WHICH SAW HIM IN THE MUSLIM LEAGUE IN THE FIFTIES (AND SOUNDLY TROUNCED IN THE 1954 ELECTION), IN THE AWAMI LEAGUE IN THE SIXTIES (CULMINATING IN HIS ELECTION TO THE PAKISTAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 1965), IN THE MINISCULE PAKISTAN (NOW BANGLADESH) NATIONAL LEAGUE HEADED BY ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN IN THE 1970 ELECTION WHICH HE LOST GRANDLY, AND THEN BACK TO THE MUSLIM LEAGUE AFTER LIBERATION AND THE EVENTUAL LEGALIZATION OF THAT PARTY IN 1976. HE, TOO, COMES FROM THE RELATIVELY UPPER INCOME GROUP, AND IS A LAWYER. HE WILL ATTEMPT TO MOBILIZE MUSLIM LEAGUE SUPPORT FOR THE FRONT FROM HIS MINISTERIAL POSITION WHICH SHOULD GIVE HIM A GREAT ADVANTAGE OVER THE SOBUR KHAN FACTION. NONETHELESS, THERE ARE SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE MUSLIM LEAGUE WHICH LINGER AS BANGLADESHIS RECALL THE ROLE OF THE PARTY IN 1971. AZIZ WILL HAVE TO OVERCOME THESE. ADBUL ALIM, THE OTHER MUSLIM LEAGUER, HAS BEEN GIVEN TEXTILES, IN WHICH HE SHOULD BE AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE DEPARTING ADVISOR.

6. PERHAPS THE MOST SURPRISING OF THE APPOINTMENTS HAS BEEN THAT OF KAZI ZAFAR AHMA OF THE UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY TO THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO. ZAFAR AND SOME OTHERS BROKE WITH THE NAP/B IN 1974 TO FORM WHAT WAS TO BE A MORE RADICAL VERSION THAN BHASHANI, IN HIS DOTAGE, WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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WILLING TO ACCEPT. DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN THE PARTY SPLIT WITH ZAFAR AND HALIM CHOWDHURY (ALSO ADDED TO THE CABINET) SUPPORTING ZIA, WHILE OTHERS (INCLUDING RASHID KHAN MENON, BROTHER OF MINISTER ENAYETULLAH KHAN) OPPOSED THE ELECTION ITSELF. ZAFAR HAS BEEN A LABOR LEADER DURING MOST OF HIS POLITICAL CAREER AND IS CURRENTLY EDITOR OF THE LEFTIST WEEKLY "NAYAJUG" ("NEW AGE"). HIS HANDLING OF THE IMPORTANT EDUCATION PORTFOLIO AND THE VOLATILE STUDENTS WILL BEAR WATCHING. IT IS OFTEN ALLEGED THAT PRO-SOVIET ELEMENTS HAVE WORKED THEIR WAY INTO THE MINISTRY; IF SO, THEY MAY FIND IT INTERESTING TO HAVE AS MINISTER ONE WHO IS REPUTED TO BE PRO-CHINESE* HALIM HAS ALSO BEEN GIVEN AN IMPORTANT POST DEALING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. HE LEFT THE PAKISTAN ARMY IN 19YW AND WORKED IN CIVIL ADMINISTRATION UNTIL 1966 BEFORE ENTERING POLITICS WITH BHASHANI. LIKE MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES, HOWEVER, HE ENJOYS THE AMENITIES OF

HIGHER SOCIAL STATION AND IT IS THOUGHT HE WILL NOT DO MUCH TO DISRUPT THIS.

7. THE TINY BANGLADESH SCHEDULED CASTES FEDERATION HAS BEEN REWARDED BY A MINISTERIAL POST FOR ITS LEADER RASARAJ MONDAL. THE PORTFOLIO OF RELIEF AND REHABILITATION, HOWEVER, IS AN IMPORTANT ONE AND ESPECIALLY SO NOW WITH THE NEEDS OF THE REFUGEES FROM BURMA. HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE EAST PAKISTAN ASSEMBLY, 1954-58, AND WAS A MINISTER OF STATE.

8. OF THE FOUR NEW MEMBERS UNDER THE JAGODAL "QUOTA", TWO HAVE LONG POLITICAL RECORDS AND TWO (HABIBULLAH

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KHAN AND DR. AMENA RAHMAN) HAVE ONLY RECENTLY JOINED AND

HAVE BEEN INCONSPICUOUS. HABIBULLAH KHAN ONCE WORKED FOR GENERAL MOTORS IN PAKISTAN AND ITS SUCCESSORS IN EAST PAKISTAN/BANGLADESH. OBAIDUR RAHMAN WAS IN THE SIXTIES AND THOUGH AUGUST 15, 1975, A MEMBER OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE OF SOME PROMINENCE; HE WAS A MINISTER OF STATE UNDER MUJIB. HE LATER JOINED THE DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE HEADED BY THE NOW-JAILED FORMER PRESIDENT KHONDAKAR MUSHTAQUE AHMAD. THE DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE WAS

BANNED IN OCTOBER, 1976 (OBAID HAD EARLIER SPENT SOME TIME IN ZIA'S JAIL) BUT SEVERAL OF THE PARTY HAVE JOINED JAGODAL. OBAID WAS THE MOST NOTABLE, HAS BEEN REWARDED WITH A MINOR PORTFOLIO, AND WILL BE EXPECTED TO HELP IN PARTY WORK. MIRZA GOLAM HAFIZ, WHO JOINED JAGODAL AT ITS FORMATION, HAS BEEN IN POLITICS SINCE HIS STUDENT DAYS IN PRE-PARTITION INDIA. AN ACTIVE MUSLIM LEAGUE STUDENT

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LEADER, HE LEFT THE PARTY TO JOIN THE GANOTANTRIK DAL AND ACHIEVE ELECTION TO THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY IN THE MUSLIM LEAGUE ROUT OF 1954. SINCE LIBERATION HE HAS BEEN A PROSPEROUS LAWYER AND PRESIDENT OF THE BANGLADESH-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY.

9. MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE JAGODAL'S NEW MEMBERS ARE THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN RETAINED AND WHO HAD BEEN ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE NEW PARTY. TWO OF THESE HOLD MAJOR PORTFOLIOS: SAIFUR RAHMAN (COMMERCE) AND JAMALUDDIN KHAN (INDUSTRIES). THESE TWO WILL BESRESSED TO SUPERVISE THEIR IMPORTANT MINISTERIES AND AT TTP SAME TIME TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EXPANSION OF THE PARTY. MOST OF THE OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE EXPTECTED TO BE ACTIVE POLITICALLY HAVE BEEN VGIVEN OR RETAINED IN LESSER MINISTERIES. THESE INCLUDE MOUDUD AHMAD (POSTS, TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE), NURUL HUQ (PORTS AND SHIPPING), ENAYETULLAH KHAN (PETROLEUM) AND SHAMSUL HUDA CHOUDHURY (CULTURE AND SPORTS). THEY WILL BE EXPECTED TO HIT THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL. MOUDUD ADDITIONALLY IS THE KEY CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISOR AND WILL DEVOTE MUCH TIME TO FINISHING THE DOCUMENT WHICH WILL PREVAIL AFTER THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.

10. THE CORE OF THE CABINET, HOWEVER, IS STILL FILLED BY "NON-POLITICAL" MEN. THE KEY PORTFOLIOS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (SHAMSUL HUQ), PLANNING (M.N.SNUDA), AGRICULTUR (AZIZUL HUQUE) AND FOOD (A. M. KHAN) ARE UNCHANGED. CIVIL SERVANT SHAFIUL AZAM REMAINS AT JUTE. ZIA HIMSELF RETAINS DEFENSE AND FINANCE, ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE WILL SHED THE LATTER. IN HOME, MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN, WHO HAS RUN THE MINISTRY AS DEPUTY ADVISOR, IS NOW FULL MINISTER AND IN CHARGE. ONLY THE POLITICIZATION OF SAIFUR RAHMAN AND JAMALUDDIN AHMAD HAS BROKEN THE CHAIN OF

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"TECHNICIANS" IN THE TOP LEVEL.

1. WHILE WE SEE THE POLITICAL IMPROVEMENTS POSSIBLE IN THE NEW CABINET, WE ARE DOUBTFUL IF IT WILL TONE UP THE ADMINISTRATION. THE TOP LEVEL RETAINED MINISTERS HAVE THEMSELVES GENERALLY PERFORMED WELL IN THE ASSIGNMENTS. BUT THE POLITICALLY EXPERIENCED NEWCOMERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN LESSER TASKS AS THEY WILL BE EXPECTED TO WORK IN POLITICS PRIMARILY AND ADMINISTRATION ONLY SECONDARILY. WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF ZAFAR AHMAD,

THEY LEAD MINISTRIES WHICH BY AND LARGE RUN BY THEMSELVES, AND PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO, EFFECTIVELY OR OTHERWISE.

12. WE ALSO SEE NO IDEOLOGICAL CHANGES IN THE OFFING, DESPITE THE LARGELY LEFTIST BACKGROUND OF MANY OF THOSE WHO JOINED ON JUNE 29. ZIA'S DIRECTION, THE REZUTION OF THE KEY POSTS BY "NON-POLITICALS", THE ALLUREMENT OF OFFICE TO THE LEFTISTS AS WELL AS THE CONSERVATIVES,⁷ ALL COMBINE TO PREDICT LITTLE OR NO CHANGE IN EITHER DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON AN IDEOLOGICAL BASIS.
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